

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 07329 221507 Z

53

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 ADP-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 ACDA-19 OMB-01 RSR-01 /147 W

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R 221308 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5117

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USMISSION USUN

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

COMIDEASTFOR

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, (MARR, IN, US

SUBJECT: INDIAN REACTION TO REPORTS OF COMMISSIONING OF DIEGO
GARCIA

1. JUNE 21 DELHI PAPERS CARRIED BRIEF ARTICLES ON DIEGO GARCIA
UNDER HEADLINES SUCH AS " US DEFYING UN BY HAVING BASE IN OCEAN
ISLAND", " US BASE IS A VIOLATION OF UN RESOLUTION", AND " US
BASE ADDS TO WORRIES". CITING EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTRY SOURCES,
CONGRESS PARTY NATIONAL HERALD SAID THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AMERICAN
NAVAL BASE FACILITIES AT DIEGO GARCIA ADDS TO THE CONCERNS
OF INDIA AND OTHER LITTORAL AND HINTERLAND COUNTRIES STRIVING
TO GIVE SHAPE TO THE UN INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE RESOLUTION.
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PAGE 02 NEW DE 07329 221507 Z

ACCORDING TO THE EXPRESS, DISAPPOINTMENT FELT HERE IS CONFIRMED BY THE WAY ATTENTION IS BEING DRAWN TO THE POSITION THE UN HAD TAKEN ON THE ISSUE. THE TIMES OF INDIA SAID OFFICIAL SOURCES REITERATED THE VIEW THAT BASES AND FLEETS OF MAJOR POWERS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WILL LEAD TO TENSIONS AND RIVALRIES TO THE DETRIMENT OF LITTORAL STATES.

2. SOME, BUT NOT ALL, OF THE ARTICLES SAID THE SOURCES ALSO REFERRED TO "THE FEVERISH ATTEMPTS BY THE US TO ARM IRAN, SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT IN A BIG WAY IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS". THE SOURCES SAID THIS ARMS BUILD-UP ALONG WITH THE SETTING UP OF BASES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WOULD HAVE AN UNSETTLING EFFECT IN THE REGION.

3. EMBASSY PRESS CONTACTS TELL US THESE ARTICLES WERE BASED ON A BRIEFING BY RAY CHAUDHRI OF MEA EXTERNAL PUBLICITY DIVISION. THE BRIEFING ITSELF WAS CLEARLY PROMPTED BY JUNE 19 DELHI PRESS REPORTS ON A NEW YORK TIMES STORY REGARDING DIEGO GARCIA. AS REPORTED HERE, THE NEW YORK TIMES SAID NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE OF THE OPENING OF THE STATION ON MARCH 23 IN ORDER NOT TO UPSET INDIA AND SRI LANKA.

4. IN THE ABSENCE OF MEA SPOKESMAN S. K. SINGH, THE FOREIGN MINISTER, AND MRS. GANDHI, CHAUDHRI'S BRIEFING APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY THE LARGE TO EXISTING GUIDANCE, CITING THE PROVISIONS OF THE 1971 UNGA RESOLUTION ON THE INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE AND THE GOVERNMENT'S PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENTS ON DIEGO GARCIA, BAHREIN AND THE UN RESOLUTION. ACCORDING TO THE EXPRESS STORY, THE VEEHEMENCE WITH WHICH THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT WILL OPPOSE THE TENDENCY TO INCREASE THE PRESENCE OF BIG POWERS IN THE AREA WILL BE KNOWN ONLY AFTER IT CONSIDERS ALL ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM AND AFTER MRS. GANDHI RETURNS.

5. ONLY PRO-SOVIET PATRIOT CONTINUED ATTACKS ON DIEGO GARCIA JUNE 22. WIRE SERVICE REPORTS THAT ALL INDIA PEACE AND SOLIDARITY ORGANIZATION HAS CALLED ON ITS BRANCHES TO PROTEST COMMISSIONING OF US MILITARY BASE IN INDIAN OCEAN. EMBASSY THUS FAR HAS RECEIVED NO INDICATION OF ANY PROTESTS IN TRAIN.

6. IF ASKED ABOUT DIEGO GARCIA BY PRESS OF GOI, EMBASSY WILL PLAN TO DRAW ON STATE 192354 OF OCTOBER 21, 1972.
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PAGE 03 NEW DE 07329 221507 Z

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